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1. FOLLOWING IS TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH EDITION MARCH 17 VIETNAM PRESS OF REPORT OF INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTORATE CHAIRMAN NGUYEN VAN THIEU:

QUOTE: "BECAUSE I HAVE NO PERSONAL AMBITIONS, I AM NOT A LEADER NOR A MEMBER OF ANY POLITICAL GROUP, AND I AM ONLY A SOLDIER, A MEMBER OF THE MILITARY COMMUNITY, I AM ONLY EXECUTING THE MISSION WHICH THE PEOPLE AND THE ARMY HAVE ENTRUSTED TO ME. IF THE PEOPLE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN ME AND THE ARMY PROPOSES ME AS CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY, I WILL REFLECT IT AND WILL MAKE A DECISION LATER, BUT NEVER WOULD I PRESENT MY CANDIDACY VOLUNTARILY."

GERERAL NGUYEN VAN THIEU, CHAIRMAN OF THE DIRECTORATE, DECLARED THE FOREGOING YESTERDAY MORNING AT INDEPENDENCE PALACE IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM A VIETNAM PRESS CORRESPONDENT CONCERNING HIS POSSIBLE CANDIDATURE FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

GENERAL THIEU CONTINUED:

"BUT THUS FAR THE ARMY HAS NOT YET RAISED THE PROBLEM OF A CHOICE OF A MILITARY CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY: I WOULD NOT DARE TO ANTICIPATE THE PROBLEM.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izenberg DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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"SOME PEOPLE BLEIVE THAT THE ARMY IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE NATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST TWO YEARS WHEN THE ARMY RAN THE GOVERNMENT AND OBTAINED GOOD RESULTS. IN MY OPINION, THIS CONCEPT IS BASED ON THE TRUTH AND IS NOT AIMED MERELY AT PRAISING THE ARMY."

GENERAL NGUYEN VAN THIEU ALSO EMPHASIZED THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE PEOPLE IN THE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT WHICH, ACCORDING TO HIM, IS A FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION FOR NO MATTER WHICH GOVERNMENT. " IN THE ABSENCE OF THIS CONDITION THE NATIONAL SITUATION WILL BE STABILIZED ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY."

IN THE COURSE OF THE INTERVIEW WHICH LASTED MORE THAN ONE HOUR, GENERAL THIEU COVERED VARIOUS PROBLEMS WITH THE NEWSMEN, NOTABLY STABILIZATION OF RICE PRICES, MEASURES TO SUPPORT CIVIL SERVANTS AND MILITARY, AS WELL AS THE POLICIES OF

OPEN ARMS, BUILDING OF DEMOCRACY, RECONSTRUCTION OF THE RURAL AREAS IN ADDITION TO VARIOUS OPINIONS ON THE WAR AND THE PEACE.

END QUOTE.

2. COMMENT: PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THIEU'S DESIRE TO ANNOUNCE HIS AVAILABILITY, EITHER TO STIMULATE REACTION SO THAT HE MAY BE ABLE TO MEASURE HIS OWN POLITICAL STRENGTH OR IN EXPECTATION (PERHAPS PREARRANGED) THAT HIS BANDWAGON IS BEGINNING TO ROLL AND SUPPORTERS, PARTICULARLY ARMY, WILL BEGIN CLAMBERING ABOARD. LODGE

NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA 3/18/67 9:30 A.M.

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